

MACON COUNTY

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reinstatement of the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program
2. Development of School based Health Clinics
3. Quality Early Care and Education Opportunities throughout the County

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Access to Medical and Dental Care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Health and Dental Fairs with youth as target audience
- Community awareness of good nutrition habits and obesity prevention
- Establish an in-patient drug treatment facility

Births to Unwed Mothers

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Sex education for youth as a part of the school curriculum
- Social workers and health clinics in schools
- Public service campaign using local media outlets

Prenatal Care and Low Birth Weight Babies

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Parenting education
- Distribution of health information to expectant mothers
- Identify and partner with available community resources

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Juvenile violent crime and gang activity

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Education activities for parents and children
- Expand existing recreational activities
- Use of peer mediation in schools

Drugs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop drug education programs for children
- Use of mentoring programs to address substance abuse and child abuse and neglect issues
- Enhance recreational activities for youth

Child abuse and neglect

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Better economic opportunities for parents
- Parenting skills programs to address the specific needs of parents and the family
- Affordable quality day care
- Drug rehabilitation programs for addicted parents

Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Truancy Prevention

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage the Board of Education to hire and maintain sufficient staff to address this issue
- Relocate and improve the alternative education program
- Encourage the cooperation of school officials for the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program

Character Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop and present parenting programs
- Encourage the school to cooperate with Head Start
- Develop and present life skills programs for youth

Education and Career Development Programs for Youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop a mentoring program with area professionals and employers to present youth vocational options
- Facilitate a county-wide tutorial program
- Develop and present programs that will encourage youth to read good literature develop writing skills

Early Care and

Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Quality Day Care and Education throughout the County with an emphasis on literacy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify resources for ages 0-5 that will promote quality early learning experiences
- Compile and distribute resource information to providers and families
- Quality staff training and development

Information Distribution

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote community and family awareness about the importance of quality child care and literacy
- Support efforts for better trained and better paid childcare workforce
- Identify and address barriers to family accessibility to early learning opportunities

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Create employment opportunities that will allow families to live above poverty level

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage the business community to create or expand employment opportunities
- Encourage the Board of Education to create a vocational educational program that will give students skills for the current and future job markets
- Employment opportunities for released felons

Encourage governmental cooperation to fulfill the action steps

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Improve adult education opportunities
- Encourage participation in job training and placement
- Encourage the development of an inter-county transportation system

Parent Involvement and Skills

- Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Create a Family Services Center to coordinate all social services and resources

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Determine what services are available in the region
- Determine methods to better coordinate available services in the community
- Visit existing Family Resource Centers and talk with organizers to assist with the planning of a center for this community

Increase parental awareness about the importance of parental involvement in the educational process

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Create resource brochures for parents of children 0 to 5 years old
- Create a distribution network for these brochures
- Transportation issues in rural communities

Policy Recommendation

1. Create school based health clinics.
2. Create a Family Services Center to provide “one stop shop services”
3. Develop and improve participation in after school, evening and weekend programs for life skills for youth.
4. Develop and improve transportation networks both intra and inter county.
5. Improve alternative school program: in school suspension, high school on line, vocational education, flex scheduling, etc.
6. Reinstate the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program.
7. Coordinate a community wide initiative to expand early care and education opportunities.
8. Increase accessibility of high quality child care.
9. Improve adult education opportunities.
10. Encourage participation in job training and placement programs by providing multiple services for participants.
11. Legislate and fund Family Service Centers to coordinate programs to improve family well being.
12. Increase funding for programs and agencies that provide services for families.